



# SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March increased to 4.3 percent from February's rate of 4.1 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In March 2001, the rate was 4.1 percent. Total employment decreased only 90 from February 2002 and 80 from March 2001. These small decreases year-over-year represent a 12-month trend of significant decreases. The good news is that employment was strong in March, which traditionally is a month when outdoor work is sluggish.

In March, Seaport's Nonfarm Payroll Jobs increased by 310 jobs from February 2002; however, from March 2001 a decrease of 350 was recorded. Decreases from last year occurred in almost all industries. Only one industry, *Manufacturing*, posted an increase, though it was such a slight increase that it is barely recorded once the statistical rounding-up process takes place.

## SPECIAL TOPIC

### Population

The population in North Central Idaho (NCI) between July 2000 and July 2001 decreased 1.2 percent according to recently released data by the U.S. Bureau of Census (see FYI Table 1 on page 22). All five counties in NCI — Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis and Nez Perce — recorded a decrease in population. The region's economic engine, Nez Perce County, generated a decrease of .7 percent. Nez Perce County slumped in growth rank to 32 out of 44 counties in Idaho. Because of high unemployment, sawmill closures, and depressed local economies, people are migrating out of the area. As a whole, Region 2 (NCI) has not participated in the strong population growth enjoyed by other regions in the state.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Clearwater County

- Clearwater Valley Hospital in Orofino will expand and remodel its emergency room area. Construction at the Orofino hospital is expected to take about one year and will start this

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	March 2002*	Feb 2002	March 2001	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	34,290	34,320	34,330	-0.1	-0.1
Unemployment	1,470	1,400	1,420	5.0	3.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.3	4.1	4.1	0.2	-0.2
Total Employment	32,830	32,920	32,910	-0.3	-0.3
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	34,520	34,420	34,570	0.3	-0.1
Unemployment	1,750	1,800	1,710	-2.8	2.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.0	5.2	5.0	-0.2	0.0
Total Employment	32,780	32,620	32,860	0.5	-0.2
<b>JOB BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**</b>	25,280	24,970	25,630	1.2	-1.4
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	4,880	4,820	4,950	1.2	-1.4
Mining & Construction	1,150	1,090	1,260	5.5	-8.7
Manufacturing	3,730	3,730	3,690	0.0	1.1
Food Processing	70	70	100	0.0	-30.0
Lumber & Wood Products	690	700	690	-1.4	0.0
Paper Products	1,680	1,680	1,630	0.0	3.1
All Other Manufacturing	1,290	1,280	1,270	0.8	1.6
<b>Service-Producing Industries</b>	20,400	20,150	20,680	1.2	-1.4
Transportation	1,350	1,390	1,360	-2.9	-0.7
Communications & Utilities	290	280	300	3.6	-3.3
Wholesale Trade	910	900	940	1.1	-3.2
Retail Trade	4,790	4,680	4,970	2.4	-3.6
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,380	1,380	1,400	0.0	-1.4
Services	6,500	6,380	6,600	1.9	-1.5
Government Administration	2,700	2,730	2,530	-1.1	6.7
Government Education	2,480	2,410	2,580	2.9	-3.9
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

summer. "We will continue to provide patient care 24 hours a day, seven days a week during that time," said Casey Uhling, CEO. "That will extend our anticipated construction schedule, but patient care is our first priority." The ER will expand from one room and two bays to two rooms and four bays. The current area will be remodeled and expanded beyond where the existing ER entrance is located. Also included in the new construction will be a family waiting area and physician dictating space. Current plans call for two entrances — one for ambulances and one for foot traffic.

### Idaho County

- Plans have been finalized for a California aircraft engine business, Day-Air, to relocate to the former Dye Machine Supply facility in Stockton. "It's a done deal," said company owner/president Ray Anderson. "We're fully expecting to be building engines there by the end of April." Anderson said they would be relocating up to 12 employees to Grangeville and hiring four or five from the area within the next six months. The company plans to hire mechanics and mechanic trainees

who, depending on experience, will earn \$8-\$12 an hour. Day-Air overhauls twin-row radial Pratt & Whitney aircraft engines. The company focuses on air attack aircraft, such as the DC 4 and 6 models, and the CL 215, which have operated out of the Grangeville air attack facility. Anderson's experience working in the area in the past was part of the reason he wanted to relocate the company. "I worked on air tankers in Grangeville about 15 years ago. I was very impressed with it then but I didn't have any idea that we'd be moving the shop up there then." Day-Air will move into two buildings, totaling 20,000-square feet, and will occupy three acres on North D Street, formerly occupied by Dye Machine Supply. Last November, Dye Machine Supply sold its equipment to Intermountain Machine and Fab, Inc., a company started by former Dye employee Roy Schumacher.

#### **Latah County**

- The enticement of an early retirement has convinced some staff and faculty members at the University of Idaho (UI) in Moscow and Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) in Lewiston to step down at the close of this academic year as the institutions, faced with severe budget cuts from the state, attempt to limit the number of layoffs. At UI, 76 faculty and 58 staff members have decided to accept early retirement packages. "We initiated the voluntary separation/retirement opportunities program with one objective," UI President Robert Hoover said. "We wanted to minimize the number of UI employees who would have to be laid off to meet our budget shortfall. It now appears we have achieved that objective. There will still be some layoffs, but not nearly as many as there would have been without the early retirement program." At LCSC, two faculty members and two staff members will retire this spring. Both institutions were hit hard by the Idaho Legislature's budget cuts to higher education and both plan to raise student fees next year by nearly 12 percent to make up more of the budget cuts.
- Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories (SEL) will grow for the 20th year in a row, expanding the Pullman plant and opening at least 42 new jobs on the Palouse. In addition, SEL will add at least 80 employees worldwide. Of the 42 jobs opening up in Pullman, half will be engineering positions; the company employs 635 people worldwide with 525 employees working in Pullman. The company's products are used in all 50 states and in 75 countries. SEL designs, manufactures, and installs protective relays for electric power lines. The relay systems protect power lines from damage in the event of a power surge, such as a lightning strike at a transformer. Without the protection devices, the transformers can potentially explode into flames, causing lengthy power outages. The company's product line also includes systems that identify where a problem has occurred

on the line, a feature that has proven useful in war-torn countries where repair crews have been kidnapped and even killed by terrorists as they searched along the power lines for service problems.

#### **Lewis County**

- U.S. Timber Company at Craigmont has closed, leaving about 20 people out of work. The mill cut boards, dried and planed rough-cut lumber, and offered dimensional wood cut for specific orders. U.S. Timber Company bought Channel Lumber Company of Craigmont in 1997. Channel Lumber Company dated back to 1958.

#### **Nez Perce County**

- The Lewiston School Board plans to cut \$1.3 million from its budget next year, resulting in layoffs of 8.5 to 10 staff positions and reductions in education programs throughout the district. "There are two factors working against the Lewiston School District," Superintendent Joy Rapp said. "We're seeing an enrollment decrease because of the economy in Lewiston and some of the layoffs at Potlatch. And then the revenue from the state is less than what we had budgeted for at the beginning of the year."
- The lock at Lower Granite Dam re-opened in April ahead of schedule. The lock has been closed to overhaul the downstream gates since January 28. The repairs have halted river traffic to the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley longer than any time since the dam was finished in 1975. Lower Granite is one of eight dams along the Snake and Columbia Rivers linking the western edge of Idaho to the Pacific Ocean.
- Merchandise to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial is becoming available to consumers and includes items from clothing to firearms. In April, 52 vendors, organizations, clubs, and federal agencies attended a one-week planning conference sponsored by the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial at Lewiston. The conference consisted of meetings and workshops for about 400 representatives from cities, states, and organizations involved in the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Corps of Discovery's historic exploration of the American West. Vendors included the Nez Perce Tribe with cultural replicas, a banner and sign maker from Boise, Thomas Jefferson memorial gifts from Virginia, a Montana musician's compact discs, travel planners, a Lewis and Clark game, and Lewis and Clark foods from Oregon. Companies offering tours of the Lewis and Clark Trail by car or bicycle also attended.

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